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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:

MICHAEL CLARENCE CLAERHOUT

Serial No.: 10/025,558

Filed: December 26, 2001

For: IMPROVEMENTS TO TRAILER BRAKING SYSTEM

Group Art Unit: 3683

Examiner: Douglas C. Butler

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RESPONSE

To the Commissioner of Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

This is in response to the Official Action dated April 24, 2003.

In the Official Action a restriction requirement was set forth as follows:

Group I, Claims 22-31, 38 and 39;

Group II, Claims 32-26; and

Group III, Claim 37.

In response Applicant respectfully elects the Group I, Claims ²32-31, 38 and 39 for prosecution. Also, in order to advance the prosecution, please cancel without prejudice Claims
32-37.

REMARKS

It is noted that the Official Action objects to the terms "rigid" and "rigidly" on the grounds that the new matter has been presented. However, it is submitted that the claims, as currently presented, read in the light of the specification and with reference to Figure 2 will reasonably apprise those skilled in the art of the claimed scope of the invention. On page 4, lines 6-7, of the original Specification, the laminate is described as "by nature thin, being only a fraction of a millimeter thick." The laminate is further described as having "no moving parts" (page 4, line 11). The laminate is designed to fit under a brake pedal shoe and the underlying metal to which the shoe is customarily connected "without affecting a noticeable physical change in the brake pedal." That is, the driver of the vehicle will not notice the inclusion of the laminate when operating the brake." (page 4, lines 7-10).

It is submitted that laminates, as described and by nature, may be substantially rigidly disposed.

The Collins English Dictionary (1994), 3rd. Edition, pages 872-873, Great Britain Harper Collins Publishers, defines the word "laminate" as:

Laminate *n.* - a material made by bonding together two or more sheets.

A further definition can be found in The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1991), 8th Edition, page 663, New York: Oxford University Press:

Laminate *n.* - a laminated structure or material, especially of layers fixed together to form rigid or flexible material.

A further definition can be found in Chambers Science and Technology Dictionary (1992), New Edition, Edinburgh: W&R Chambers Ltd.:

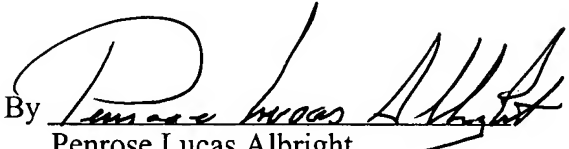
Laminate (Eng.) - a structural member made up of two or more components bonded together, like two sheets separated by a honeycomb.

It is submitted that the Specification and drawings considered in the light of these terms of the art as defined would lead one skilled in the art to understand the laminate of the present invention is substantially rigid.

This will acknowledge several telephone discussions of the invention between the Patent Examiner and the undersigned. Accordingly, it is the impression of the undersigned that this Response should place the Application in form for allowance and to be passed to issue. Action to such effect is, accordingly, respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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